

Scientific Understanding Work Group

Final Charge

Scientific Understanding: The work group's charge is to (a) identify shortcomings in our current scientific understanding that limit, and (b) make recommendations to fill knowledge gaps that could enhance, our ability to assess health effects and to inform decisions at all levels to minimize the health risks of chemicals.

Research related to many scientific disciplines is needed to fill the large gaps in knowledge about the causes and consequences of human exposure to toxic chemicals (including chemicals emitted by biological contaminants). Recent scientific advances provide the opportunity to address some of these gaps.

Potential activities for the proposed work group include reviewing recent efforts to address known gaps and shortcomings in toxicological research (e.g., EPA's Strategic Plan for Reviewing the Toxicity of Chemicals), epidemiological research (e.g., the National Children's Study), clinical research (e.g., intervention studies), exposure science, the compilation of scientific information to inform risk assessments (e.g., ATSDR's ToxProfiles), and the development of technologies to prevent and reduce health impacts (e.g., green chemistry). Based on this review, the group will offer suggestions for government, academic, and private sector research efforts. The group will also consider improvements related to the compilation of, and public access to, risk information. Finally, the work group will consider strategies for filling knowledge gaps and addressing emerging priorities through both increased coordination and changes in research emphasis.